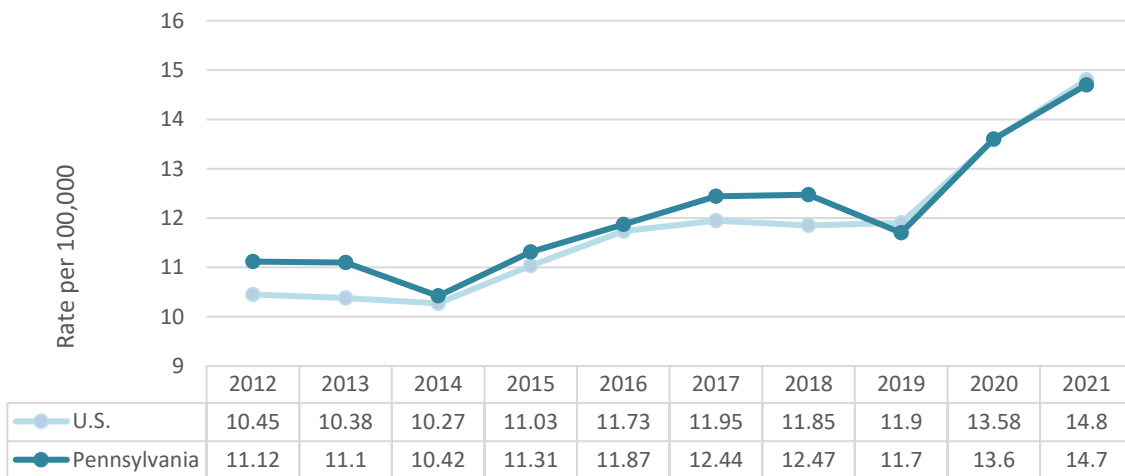


**A. DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE**

**Background:** Firearm-related deaths increased significantly across the country in 2020 and reached record levels in 2021.<sup>i</sup> In Pennsylvania, an estimated 1,906 individuals died as the result of firearm-related injuries in 2021; more than half of these deaths (997, 52%) were suicides.<sup>ii</sup> Pennsylvania ranked 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation for the number of gun deaths, and its estimated firearm mortality rate (14.7 per 100,000) is similar to the national average.<sup>iii</sup> The number and rates of gun deaths have been on the rise in Pennsylvania since 2014, and have increased sharply since 2020, largely keeping pace with or exceeding national trends. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show people of color account for a disproportionate share of gun violence victimizations. Pennsylvania’s data shows a similar trend: Black Pennsylvanians are four times as likely as White Pennsylvanians to die as the result of firearm-related injuries (42.1 per 100,000 vs. 9.05 per 100,000, respectively).

**Figure 1. Firearm-related Fatality Rates, U.S. vs. Pennsylvania, 2012-2021\***

\*Note: 2021 data is preliminary and subject to change.



At the same time, needs for behavioral health services have increased statewide and at every level of care. In its recently published report, Pennsylvania’s Behavioral Health Commission for Adult Behavioral Health (established by Act 54 of 2022) noted that an

estimated 34 percent of Pennsylvanians have a mental illness or substance use disorder (SUD) – higher than the national average prevalence rate of 31 percent.<sup>iv</sup> The intersections of mental illness, SUD, disability, and other co-occurring concerns within the criminal justice and public safety systems has been well-documented. Resource limitations and workforce challenges coupled with surging demand have led to serious strains in both systems, and often result in individuals with behavioral health issues falling through the cracks. As with gun violence, access to health care (including for behavioral health) is skewed by race, with Black and Hispanic Pennsylvanians more likely to report barriers to care than White Pennsylvanians.<sup>v</sup>

These statistics reinforce the need for effective – and collaborative – public safety and public health prevention, intervention, and response strategies. Research suggests that communities can reduce firearm-related deaths by deploying evidence-based and evidence-informed models designed to bolster protective factors and defuse potentially dangerous situations.<sup>vi</sup> These can include efforts to expand evidence-informed suicide prevention programs, increase availability of behavioral health services for people in need, as well as reduce access to firearms for individuals that pose a risk of hurting themselves or others.<sup>vii</sup>

***Applicant Agency Mission & History:*** The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) was established in 1978 and serves as Pennsylvania’s State Administering Agency (SAA). PCCD’s mission is to enhance the quality, coordination, and planning within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, to facilitate the delivery of services to victims of crime, and to increase the safety of Pennsylvania’s communities. Over the course of its history, the agency has been tasked with administering a number of programs and funding streams related to this mission, including efforts to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health needs interacting with the justice system as well as supporting investments in community-led efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence.

PCCD's governance structure consists of an overarching Commission, two training boards, the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC), and six Advisory Committees: the Children's Advocacy Center Advisory Committee (CACAC); the County Adult Probation and Parole Advisory Committee (CAPPAC); the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC); the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee (JJDPAC); the Mental Health and Justice Advisory Committee (MHJAC); and the Victims' Services Advisory Committee (VSAC). The Commission and its related Advisory Committees are comprised of subject matter experts, practitioners, and community members who are well attuned to the justice-related problems facing the citizens of the Commonwealth. PCCD funding support is guided by the agency's Strategic Framework, which is developed every four years and sets goals, objectives, and guiding principles for PCCD's collective efforts. The *2021-2025 Strategic Framework* was developed in collaboration with PCCD leadership, and a committee comprised of Advisory Committee Chairs to ensure alignment with respective Advisory Committee priorities and responsibilities.

***Nexus to FY 2022-23 Byrne SCIP Funding:*** PCCD's funding priorities have historically included support for various methods for assisting state and local systems with the prevention, reduction, and intervention of crime and violence. The agency also has a strong track record of advancing collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches that bring together criminal justice, behavioral health, and social service system partners to increase adoption of evidence-based practices. As an example, PCCD was instrumental in launching Pennsylvania's first-in-the-nation Stepping Up Technical Assistance Center, through the national Stepping Up Initiative, in partnership with sister agencies, statewide partners, and the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. Seven years after the initiative's launch, the majority of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have participated in training and technical assistance to utilize the

Stepping Up framework locally with a goal of reducing the number of people with mental illness in jails. In addition, the agency's support of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training proliferation has garnered national recognition from CIT International.

In 2019, PCCD's responsibilities expanded with the signing of Executive Order 2019-06, which tasked state agencies to work together to identify and implement evidence-based initiatives to help address the public health and public safety crisis of gun violence in Pennsylvania. The Order named PCCD's Chairman as a senior advisor on gun violence reduction, and also created an 18-member Special Council on Gun Violence within PCCD charged with identifying recommendations to reduce incidents of gun violence within the Commonwealth. Guided by the Council's *Report of Findings, Recommendations & Action Steps* adopted in 2020, PCCD's gun violence prevention and reduction initiatives include grants and funding, technical assistance and stakeholder engagement, as well as data and research. Providing support for effective, community-led gun violence prevention efforts is also one of the agency's top strategic priorities, as articulated in PCCD's *2021-2025 Strategic Framework*, which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in December 2020.

More information about the agency's Gun Violence initiatives is available on [PCCD's website](#).

The FY 2022/23 Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) funds will complement PCCD's work to advance use of evidence-based programs and access to care for people with behavioral health needs who interact with the justice system as well as bolster efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence in the Commonwealth.

***SCIP Funding Priorities & Objectives:*** PCCD intends to utilize its existing *2021-2025 Strategic Framework* as well as other strategic planning documents (e.g., MHJAC Strategic Plan, Special Council on Gun Violence Report of Recommendations, etc.) as starting points for the development of the BJA-required Program Plan and Budget by the Advisory Committee

of Chairs and the Commission (serving in its role as the Crisis Intervention Advisory Board). As noted previously, the agency recently underwent a strategic planning process shaped by a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, and included goals and objectives aligned with the purpose and scope of Byrne SCIP. As part of the strategic planning process, PCCD staff engaged members of its Commission, Advisory Committees, Training Boards, SSSC, Subcommittees, Workgroups, as well as organizations that had sought and/or received funding from the agency. These included individuals who applied for and/or received awards for projects related to gun violence reduction, violence intervention and prevention, community violence prevention/reduction, crisis intervention, problem-solving courts, and other initiatives related to the scope of Byrne SCIP. (A copy of the Commission's *2021-2025 Strategic Framework* is included as an attachment for reference.)

In addition, a number of Advisory Committees or other advisory bodies (e.g., Special Council on Gun Violence) have developed plans that reflect the specific needs and strategic priorities for particular aspects of the agency's work. As an example, MHJAC recently conducted a day-long strategic planning session in November 2022 to update its 2019 Strategic Plan; the preliminary revised Strategic Plan addresses areas ranging from growing demand for behavioral health services and crisis supports, mitigating impacts of regional and statewide workforce shortages, as well as building upon the success of previously instituted initiatives, such as CIT, Stepping Up, etc.

PCCD staff – in consultation with members of the Committee of Chairs, Crisis Intervention Advisory Board (e.g., Commission), and other key stakeholders – will crosswalk these previously developed strategic plans in order to develop a comprehensive Program Plan and Budget (“Funding Framework”) articulating funding priorities and objectives. As with its agency strategic planning process, PCCD is mindful of the need to ensure diverse perspectives

are present at decision-making tables and will work to ensure full compliance with the letter and spirit of SCIP membership and consultation requirements as part of its SCIP Funding Framework development.

***Subgrant Award Process and Timeline:*** PCCD will use FY 22/23 SCIP funds to focus on advancing crisis intervention programs that target the risk factors likely to lead to gun violence. PCCD will implement projects that support emerging issues and priorities adopted within its SCIP Funding Framework (to be finalized in June 2023). Recognizing the important and unique role each of its Advisory Committees play in advancing effective crisis intervention programs and addressing gun violence, PCCD intends to coordinate FY 22/23 SCIP funding through its Commission (i.e., the BJA-required Crisis Intervention Advisory Board), and utilize an advisory workgroup consisting of Advisory Committee Chairs, designees, and other stakeholders (as needed) to shape the SCIP Funding Framework.

In accordance with PCCD's application management policy, each award recommendation will be reviewed by PCCD staff, vetted by the Advisory Committee of Chairs, presented for action at relevant Advisory Committee meetings, and presented to the Commission during publicly accessible quarterly meetings.<sup>1</sup> Staff, subject matter experts, and Advisory Committee members will meet with regularity to discuss issues, review proposed projects, and subsequently provide recommendations for funding of those that are well positioned to accomplish the SCIP Funding Framework goals, objectives, and funding priorities. Additionally, and in alignment with the FY 22/23 SCIP requirements, upon approval of the Advisory Committee of Chairs and subsequently the Commission, recommended subawards will be reviewed by BJA for final approval.

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<sup>1</sup> PCCD Commission and Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public and are governed by 65 Pa. C.S. § Chapter 7 (relating to Open Meetings).

*Proposed Timeline:*

Date	Activity
Feb.-May 2023	<b><u>PCCD SCIP Funding Priorities/Objectives Plan &amp; Budget Developed.</u></b> Committee of Chairs, designees, stakeholders, and staff meet to develop and finalize recommended SCIP funding plan for consideration by the Commission (Crisis Intervention Advisory Group).
June 2023	<b><u>Commission Approval of SCIP Funding Plan &amp; Funding Announcement Released.</u></b> Commission approves SCIP funding plan in mid-June. PCCD announces the availability of SCIP funds after the Commission meeting. Funding announcement is opened in Egrants.
June-Aug. 2023	<b><u>Funding Announcement Question Period Closes.</u></b> All questions must be submitted to PCCD by this date for consideration.
	<b><u>Funding Announcement Question / Response Posting.</u></b> All questions posed to PCCD and their responses posted on website.
	<b><u>Funding Announcement Closes.</u></b> Application Deadline date (TBD – end of May). Funding Announcement closes in Egrants.
	<b><u>Administrative Rejection.</u></b> Notice sent to Applicants for any Applications administratively rejected.
Sept. 2023	<b><u>Scoring Process.</u></b> Applications are reviewed and considered based on alignment with <i>SCIP Funding Priorities and Objectives</i> , geographic distribution agency past performance.
Oct. 2023	<b><u>Committee of Chairs.</u></b> Recommendations are prepared, summarized and presented to the Committee of Chairs for consideration in late October 2023.
Nov. 2023	<b><u>Advisory Committees.</u></b> Applications are vetted by committees during quarterly meetings.
Dec. 2023	<b><u>Commission Meeting and BJA Approval.</u></b> Present applications to the Commission for consideration. After Commission action, recommended subawards are forwarded to BJA for approval.
Winter 2024	<b><u>Subaward Projects Notified of Award</u></b> ( <i>subject to BJA approval</i> )

**B. PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION**

As described in the “Description of Issue” section, Pennsylvania has experienced a surge in demand for behavioral health and crisis care in recent years and has also seen a significant increase in firearm-related incidents, including gun deaths. Byrne SCIP funding

will help augment recent investments made by the Commission to address these important issues in the Commonwealth. PCCD is proud of its ability to leverage and utilize various state and federal funding streams so that it can maximize the use of SCIP funds to promote system-wide enhancements and focus on the reduction of gun violence and promote initiatives that provide the support required. As referenced previously, PCCD plans to utilize its Commission to fulfill the BJA requirement to form a Crisis Intervention Advisory Board, informed by a group of Committee Chairs (and/or designees) and other relevant stakeholders. Collectively, this process will ensure representation of individuals from law enforcement, the community, courts, prosecution, behavioral health providers, victim services, legal counsel, and others. PCCD plans to utilize a similar structure as its Advisory Committee of Chairs to inform the development of a program plan and resulting SCIP Funding Framework. All applications that are received and recommended by reviewers will go through the standard review and action process via PCCD's Advisory Committees and, ultimately, the Commission.

As discussed, guidance for awarding funds will be supported by PCCD's SCIP Funding Framework, which will reflect a portion of the existing 2021-2025 Strategic Framework goals as well as priorities from other relevant strategic plans. To aid in development of this SCIP Funding Framework, PCCD will convene a group of representatives from each Advisory Committee (e.g., Committee of Chairs, designees, etc.) to ensure alignment with strategic priorities as well as representatives from PCCD's senior leadership team and other staff to help implement these activities. PCCD will ensure that appropriate representation from key stakeholder groups is embedded within each stage of the funding process.

PCCD will use FY 22/23 SCIP funds to support priorities and objectives identified and listed within its SCIP Funding Framework, to be finalized in June 2023. The adopted PCCD SCIP Funding Framework will:



- Provide a common understanding of SCIP funds purpose and direction, including how SCIP funds intersect with and complement other state and federal funding sources administered by the Commission;
- Identify emerging trends in preventing violence and suicide, with a specific focus on firearm-related incidents;
- Crosswalk existing strategic priorities, programs, and initiatives already supported by PCCD and partner agencies aligned with SCIP goals and objectives, including any known gaps or areas of need;
- Identify specific funding goals, priorities, and objectives to shape the development of a SCIP funding announcement;
- Provide a basis for measuring success (e.g., research and evaluation partners); and
- Create a framework and provide context to inform decision-making.

As referenced earlier and in alignment with the FY 22/23 SCIP requirements, upon Commission action, all recommended subawards will be reviewed by BJA for final approval.

### **C. CAPABILITIES & COMPETENCIES**

Since 1978, PCCD has supported justice system improvements, victim services and compensation, and other initiatives responsive to the needs of practitioners, communities, and the Commonwealth. By bringing together a wide range of experts in the fields of criminal and juvenile justice, victim services, and related professions, PCCD coordinates the collective examination of problems, proposes solutions, and evaluates the impact of those solutions. The agency focuses on research, policy, planning, training, evidence-based programming, technology, outreach, and support services. PCCD also has a strong track record of fostering coordination among federal, state, and local partners as well as granting federal and state funds.

Last fiscal year, PCCD administered more than \$460 million in state and federal funds to advance a wide range of programs aligned with its statutory responsibilities and mission.

To ensure full compliance with grant management requirements of Byrne SCIP and to increase agency capacity to take on this work, PCCD will utilize its administrative set-aside to support expansion of its Program and Fiscal staff complement. The agency will identify a ***Project Coordinator (TBD)*** position responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the initiative, including coordinating with project partners and subgrantees. PCCD also plans to identify additional ***Program and Fiscal staff*** who will be assigned to subgrantees to monitor and provide ongoing technical assistance support to subgrantees. PCCD believes this personnel structure and expansion will ensure the agency is able to meet the scope of required grant-related activities.

The Project Coordinator will also ensure data from participating sites is collected in accordance with BJA's performance measurement requirements and will also work closely with research/evaluation partners to facilitate site-specific and project-wide performance measurement, data analysis, and evaluation efforts. This position, along with additional Program staff, will be housed in PCCD's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) within the unit of Criminal Justice System Improvements (CJSI). OJP-CJSI is responsible for the administration and oversight of numerous federal funding streams, including Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) and Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), among others. Assigned Fiscal staff will work closely with Program Staff in OJP-CJSI and will be housed within the agency's Office of Financial Management and Administration (OFMA).

#### **D. PLAN FOR COLLECTING THE DATA REQUIRED**

PCCD has carefully reviewed the performance measures prescribed by BJA as part of the FY 2022-23 SCIP solicitation. BJA's SCIP required performance measures will be incorporated within each programmatic response selected for funding as part of PCCD's Egrants System and reported on by PCCD through BJA's Performance Management Tool (PMT). In addition, PCCD's Program staff assist in developing additional impact measures based on national research measures already required in various purpose/program areas, which sub-recipients may need to incorporate into their program designs in order to receive SCIP formula funding. PCCD prioritizes the collection of data that allows for an analysis of project outcomes related to stated objectives and reviews the performance measures of each project to ensure appropriate measures are selected and applied. Funded agencies are required to submit performance data on a quarterly basis via PCCD's established electronic grants management system (Egrants System).

In addition, PCCD plans to leverage a portion of its FY 2022-23 state share Byrne SCIP funds to support costs associated with research and evaluation. In its role as Pennsylvania's Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), PCCD enjoys a number of partnerships with research entities, as well as in-house capabilities within its Office of Research, Evaluation, and Strategic Policy Development (ORESPD). The agency's FY 2022-23 SCIP Funding Framework will identify the specific portion of funds to be reserved for these research and evaluation activities, as well as address any additional statewide training, technical assistance, and/or capacity building needs identified as part of the strategic planning process.

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- <sup>i</sup> Roni Caryn Rabin, “Gun-Related Suicides and Killings Continued to Rise in 2021, C.D.C. Reports,” *The New York Times*, October 6, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/health/guns-homicides-suicides-cdc.html>; Jennifer Mascia, “Gun Deaths Hit an All-Time High (Again) in 2021,” *The Trace*, September 8, 2022, <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/09/gun-deaths-cdc-2021-record/>.
- <sup>ii</sup> Jennifer Mascia, “Gun Deaths Hit an All-Time High (Again) in 2021,” *The Trace*, September 8, 2022, <https://www.thetrace.org/2022/09/gun-deaths-cdc-2021-record/>.
- <sup>iii</sup> *Firearm Mortality by State*, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessed 11/7/2022.
- <sup>iv</sup> *Behavioral Health Commission Special Report: Recommendations to the Pennsylvania General Assembly*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Human Services, October 2022.
- <sup>v</sup> *The State of Our Health: A Statewide Health Assessment of Pennsylvania*, Pennsylvania Department of Health, March 2022.
- <sup>vi</sup> T.R. Simon, S.R. Kegler, et al., “[Increases in Firearm Homicide and Suicide Rates – United States, 2020-2021.](#)” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/CDC, October 7, 2022.
- <sup>vii</sup> *Governor’s Special Council on Gun Violence: Report of Findings, Recommendations & Action Steps*, Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, March 2020.